



## **Transportation Advisory Committee**

Date: February 8, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

### **Minutes.**

#### **1. Administration.**

Members in Attendance: John Aslanian, Beth Benedikt, Bill Copithorne (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Paul Schlichtman.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

#### **B. Approval of January 11, 2023 Meeting Notes.**

Minutes for the Meeting of January 11, 2023, were approved.

#### **C. Update on Membership**

TAC has one at-large position open, and it is recommending Associate Member Jim Stubbe to fill the position. A letter to the Select Board will be sent.

#### **D. Correspondence sent/received between December 10 and January 6, 2022.**

1. **"Mass /Appleton Pedestrian Safety Concerns..."** Letter to SB from Petru Sofio, 1/25/23.

Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee is still in place, and it is the appropriate group to refer the letter. Bill Copithorne agreed unless there is an issue that needs to be addressed now.

Scott Smith added that the flashing green noted in the correspondence is expressly forbidden in MUTCD. Len Diggins recalled an email response from Corey Rateau regarding the flashing green. He will review his emails and forward it to Laura Swan.

## **2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).**

Scott Smith informed TAC about a construction update on Rt 16 on the Somerville-Arlington line. The rotary connecting Rt 16 and Powderhouse Blvd will be changed to a traffic signal. The project is planned for 18 months and construction begins next week. Detours and reduced lanes along Rt 16 might affect traffic in East Arlington.

## **3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).**

### **A. Update from the Department of Public Works (DPW).**

Bill Copithorne provided follow up information on questions raised at previous TAC Meetings.

Regarding regulatory speed limits along Summer St: Mystic St to Symmes Rd/Brattle St: 25 mph; Symmes Rd/Brattle St to Overlook Rd: 30 mph; Overlook Rd to Alpine St: 25 mph; Alpine St to Lexington Town Line: 35 mph.

Regarding costs for recently installed RRFBs: Quincy St/Fountain Rd and Gray St was \$18,500 and Lowell St by the Arlington Reservoir was \$39,300. The top five bids were within \$5,000 of each other. As a reminder of scope, this bid included the labor and materials for 2 RRFBs at Quincy/Gray, 2 RRFBs at Lowell St, 2 flashing "walk ahead" signs at Lowell St, and one speed feedback sign at Lowell St. The bid was in September 2021, and prices likely are higher now.

Construction season plans are being finalized. Water main work to replace old cast iron pipe will take place on Broadway from Sunnyside Ave to N Union St. DPW likely will be able to maintain two lanes of traffic. Paving and sidewalks will be done next year.

DPW Building is scheduled to open in April. The path from Grove St (tennis courts) to AHS along the DPW facility will be addressed after the DPW Facility is completed including Grove St resurfacing and sidewalk reconstruction.

DPW is seeking to provide updates and receive comments on design plans at the next TAC meeting. It will need to deliver messages to abutters, letter writers, and the public.

Len Diggins asked how DPW receives and prioritizes communications from the Select Board and establishes a timeline. Bill Copithorne responded that for small projects, DPW handles the request internally (e.g., removing the parking space across from Town Hall). For larger projects, the DPW Director and/or DPW Operations Manager receive the communication letter from the Select Board.

**Addendum:**

**Bill Copithorne wished to clarify his comments and add the following addendum to his update, which was read into the record on March 8, and accepted by TAC:**

Paragraph 5 ("DPW Building is..."): To clarify, based on my conversation with Mike Rademacher, the path between DPW & High School will be addressed once the new building is completed as noted. This is expected to happen this year. This will not be in tandem with the anticipated work on Grove Street which is not likely until CY 2025. This is because once the new building is completed, the existing buildings (i.e. current DPW Admin, garages) and adjoining portions of the Town Yard will also be rehabilitated. This work will likely extend into next year. Grove Street resurfacing and sidewalk work will not be done until all work on the site is completed.

Paragraph 7 ("Len Diggins asked..."): The DPW Director and/or the Operations Manager receive the communications letter from the Select Board (along with the associated "TAC Packet") regardless of project size. For smaller projects, the Operations Manager (e.g. removing parking space) via DPW Staff will handle internally. For larger projects, DPW Director/Operations Manager will coordinate work through whatever means needed (i.e. via Engineering, outside contractors, etc.).

**B. There was no update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).**

**C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).**

**4. Update: Chestnut St Improvements**

Stantec finalized the Chestnut St design. The Town Engineer is working on the scheduling and process including costing to see if the project can fit into the existing contract to save time and accelerate the project. If the projects needs to go to bid, it will add 2 – 3 weeks (for May or June start).

Paul Schlichtman commented that the grant for the Chestnut St Improvements expires at end of the calendar year. He is requesting notification of when a decision is made to conduct the work under the existing contract or through a public bid. He also requested to see the final design by Stantec.

## 5. Discussion: Highland Avenue and High Haith Road

Laura Swan summarized comments from Corey Rateau regarding speeding on Highland Ave, noting that APD often enforces speeding in the area and regularly pulls over motorists for excessive speed.

DPW noted that it can add extra crosswalk signs to make them double sided. Jim Stubbe said the Crosswalk Safety Working Group will be developing guidelines regarding crosswalk treatments for safety and will communicate with DPW to make sure recommendations make sense for implementation (including cost and timing). These will include chicane, speed bumps, road calming devices.

Jeff Maxtutis added that recommendations will follow MUTCD. He suggested that guidelines include raised crosswalks in addition to horizontal devices, noting that raised devices have not been utilized by the Town and should not be excluded. Laura Swan concurred that raised crosswalks should not be ruled out if they are appropriate to increase safety. Scott Smith said that Somerville utilizes raised devices, such as on Holland St. He also showed the below chart showing the yield rate of certain treatments:

**HCM7 Method to estimate average pedestrian (dis)satisfaction making the crossing is sensitive to**

- Ability to cross immediately (adequate gap)
- Delay if not able to cross immediately
- Daily traffic (relates to street width/speed)
- Specific crossing treatments
  - Marked crosswalk, median island, RRFB (studied treatments)
- Any treatment that improves yielding or shortens crossing distances will show a satisfaction benefit

Crossing Treatment	Yield Rate (%)		Sample Size (sites)
	Average	Range	
No treatment (unmarked)	24	0-100	37
Crosswalk markings only (any type)	33	0-95	58
Crosswalk markings, plus:			
Pedestal-mounted flashing beacon	26	0-52	2
Overhead sign	35	12-57	2
Overhead flashing beacon (push-button activation)	51	13-91	14
Overhead flashing beacon (passive activation)	73	61-76	29
In-roadway warning lights	58	53-65	11
Median refuge island	60	0-100	21
Pedestrian crossing flags	74	72-80	6
In-street pedestrian crossing signs	76	35-88	20
Rectangular rapid-flashing beacon (RRFB)	82	31-100	64
School crossing guard	86	—	1
School crossing guard and RRFB	92	—	1
Pedestrian hybrid beacon (HAWK)	91	73-99	37
Mid-block crossing signals, half signals	98	94-100	13

HCM7, Exhibit 25-28

Bill Copithorne responded that the Town has no policy against raised crosswalks. Some departments have strong feelings against them, such as snow and ice removal and drainage concerns.

Len Diggins said that cost is an important parameter, as the Town needs to pay for the improvements and there are tradeoffs on what will or will not be funded. Jeff Maxtutis responded that TAC generally is not fiscally constrained, and the Select Board is given the responsibility of how to expend the Town's funds.

John Aslanian added that CPA funds can be used in some instances, for example the crossing of Summer St to Buzzell Field. Laura Swan said that the DPCD Transportation Planner job has been posted, and Dan Amstutz was successful in finding funding for transportation projects.

## **6. Park Avenue: Crosswalks at Oakland and Appleton**

A Working Group was formed to assess the crossing of Park Ave at Oakland Ave and Appleton St. Scott Smith recommended a review of the 2019 Corridor Plan. In response to a question, Bill Copithorne responded that there is no schedule or plan for Park Ave at this time.

## **7. Update: Downing Square Signage**

Melissa Laube updated that the Working Group is arriving at a consensus: “Plaques” installed under stop signs, a minimum of 7’ from the ground, saying “Traffic from [left or right, as appropriate] does not stop”. The plaques are MUTCD compliant. There is a question of whether it needs to say “Traffic from [left or right, as appropriate] on Park Ave does not stop”, and whether signs are needed for Westminster Ave and Bow St.

Jeff Maxtutis noted that this is the “best, simplest” option. It is important not to add confusion. The Town will need to replace the sign posts because they are not high enough at present. If a plaque is added to Westminster Ave, the “No Parking” sign will need to-be relocated. The Working Group also considered a map/chart, but decided that it was too much to read for a motorist.

Beth Benedikt added that there seems to-be increased traffic along Lowell St due to new apartment building. The plaques would be helpful to direct motorists.

Bill Copithorne agreed that the plaques make sense. He added that changing the posts and signs is not a big deal.

Len Diggins noted that navigating the intersection on foot is challenging; pedestrians do not know how motorists will act. Jim Stubbe agreed about the challenges that pedestrians face at this intersection and asked about crash data. Jeff Maxtutis said the Working Group should look at the crash data.

Melissa Laube pointed out that the flashing yellow light across Park Ave at the crosswalk might not be visible during daylight. Bill Copithorne responded that DPW is aware of problems with the flashing yellow light. DPW is monitoring it for component repair and replacement.

## **8. Update: Wachusett Ave and Appleton St**

Jim Stubbe noted that the intersection is an open expanse and drivers roll stops. The Working Group will review the draft sketch from the Connect Arlington Plan and also will consider a roundabout. Jeff Maxtutis responded that a roundabout works best with balanced traffic flows. He added that eastbound Appleton Ave does not have a stop sign and one could be considered for that location.

## **9. Update: Gibbs School/ Rawson Rd**

John Aslanian explained that the intersection of Broadway and Rawson Rd is near the Gibbs School and a busy Fenway Market. Broadway is very wide at this location which makes the crosswalk long. There have been three crashes nearby over the last few years.

Recommendations will be to add a crosswalk on the northside of Broadway across Rawson Rd. Per Corey Rateau, designate the stretch near Fenway Market on Rawson Rd as no parking. Consider School Zone around the area.

As Foster St is one way, there is an opportunity to tighten the curves and slow turning vehicles, particularly along the southeast corner (Foster St).

Paul Schlichtman pointed out that the southbound, one-way Foster St direction means that students exit on the left-side of vehicles at drop off. The Town can consider changing Foster St to one-way northbound and Tufts St to one-way southbound to permit students to exit vehicles on the right-hand side. These changes would necessitate a reevaluation of the traffic flows throughout the neighborhood.

Laura Swan responded that the Town can consider a MassDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) evaluation. SRTS arrival and dismissal audit would require the Gibbs School Principal to make request as the evaluation is conducted for the school.

## **10. Update: 1021-1025 Mass Ave Permit**

Jeff Maxtutis updated that he conducted a review on behalf of TAC of the 1021-1025 Mass Ave Permit. DPW and ZBA also submitted reviews. There is not much traffic impact for this project. There will be a midblock crosswalk near Walnut St, and he asked to consider additional safety measures such as installation of an RRFB.

The developer committed to include reconstruction of the sidewalk and the addition of street trees. Emergency access and deliveries will need additional consideration.

The Town is waiting to hear back from the developer.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.